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AUTHOR Kline, Susan
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ABSTRACT

This bulletin presents findings from the fifth Annual Survey of Jails. The survey was developed to provide an estimate of the country's jail inmate population in the years between National Jail Censuses which are conducted every 5 years, the last being in 1983. These findings are summarized: (1) at midyear 1987 local jails held 295,873 inmates, an 8% increase over the previous year; (2) the average daily population was 290,300, an increase of 9% from 1986; (3) on June 30, 1987 convicted inmates made up 48% of the adults with a known conviction status; (4) males accounted for 92% of the jail inmate population, with the number of adult female inmates in local jails increasing 53% since 1983; (5) during the year ending June 30, 1987 there were an estimated 17 million admissions and releases from local jails; (6) the number of jail inmates increased 32% since 1983, while the total rated capacity of the nation's jails rose 15%; (7) on June 30, 1987 over 75% of the nation's jail population was housed in jails of 358 jurisdictions, each with an average daily population of at least 100 inmates; (8) approximately 87% of the jurisdictions with large jail populations had one or more jails holding inmates for other authorities, about the same as in 1986; (9) occupancy exceeded rated capacity by about 11% among jurisdictions with large jail populations; and (10) approximately 41% of the jurisdictions with large jail populations reported at least one jail with an inmate death. Methodology is summarized and tables illustrate the findings. (ABL)

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U.S. Department of Justice
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Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin

Jail Inmates 1987

CG 021588

At midyear 1987 local jails in the United States held an estimated 295,873 persons, 8% more than a year earlier. Overall jail occupancy was 98% of the rated capacity of the Nation's jails. The average daily jail population for the year ending June 30, 1987, was 290,300, a 28% increase since 1983.[1] These findings are from the 1987 Annual Survey of Jails, which obtained data from 1,135 jails in 866 jurisdictions, a representative sample of the Nation's jails. Approximately one-third of the jails across the country were surveyed.[2]

Other survey findings include:

- During the year ending June 30, 1987, there were 17 million jail admissions and releases.
- Males constituted 92% and females 8% of all jail inmates. Whites were 57% of the local jail population; blacks, 42%; and other races, 1%. Hispanics were 14% of all inmates.
- Unconvicted inmates (those on trial or awaiting arraignment or trial) were 52% of the adults being held in jails; convicted inmates (those awaiting or serving a sentence or those returned to jail for violating probation or parole) were 48%.
- Jails were operating at 98% of capacity in 1987, up from 85% in 1983.
- There were 358 jurisdictions with at least 100 jail inmates as an average daily population in the most recent census (1983). In 1987 these jurisdictions operated 611 jails, which held a total of 224,811 inmates, or about 76% of all jail inmates in the country. In these jurisdictions:

--The overall occupancy rate was 111% of rated capacity;
--87% of the jurisdictions held inmates for other authorities;
--Of the 26,838 inmates held for other authorities in 1987, 11,257 were being held because of crowding elsewhere, principally in State prisons;
--28% of the jurisdictions had at least one jail under court order to limit population, and 33% were under court order to improve one or more conditions of confinement;
--41% of the jurisdictions reported at least one jail with an inmate death during the year. There were a total of 312 inmate deaths, up 13% from the preceding year. Of these deaths, 55% were from natural causes. Suicides were up 4%, from 107 in 1986 to 111 in 1987.

[1]For a complete enumeration of jail inmates from the 1978 and 1983 jail censuses and the 1984-87 Annual Survey of Jails, see appendix table.

[2]For a definition of local jails, see Methodology.

December 1988

This bulletin presents findings from the fifth Annual Survey of Jails. The survey was developed to provide an estimate of the country's jail inmate population in the years between National Jail Censuses, which are conducted every 5 years. The last census was in 1983, and another is under way this year.

BJS efforts to collect accurate information on jail populations are vital to policymakers and the general public in assessing the demands placed on correctional resources.

The Annual Survey of Jails was made possible through the cooperation of local jail administrators across the country whose facilities were selected for inclusion in the survey.

Joseph M. Bessette
Acting Director

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One-day counts

On June 30, 1987, the estimated number of inmates held in local jails was 295,873, an increase of 8% over the number held on that day a year earlier (table 1). Between 1983, the year of the most recent full census of jails, and 1987, the Nation's jail population increased 32%, for an average annual rate of 8%. One in every 612 adult residents of the United States were in jail on June 30, 1987.

Most juveniles in correctional custody are housed in juvenile facilities. Fewer than 1% of the inmates of the Nation's jails in 1987 were juveniles. An estimated 1,781 juveniles were housed in adult jails across the country on June 30, 1987.[3]

Average daily population

The average daily population for the year ending June 30, 1987, was 290,300, an increase of 9% from 1986.[4] The average daily population for males increased 26% since 1983; during the same period of time, the female average daily population increased 55%. The average daily juvenile population for the year ending June 30, 1987, was 1,575.

[3]For a definition of juveniles, see Methodology.

[4]For a discussion of the differences between 1-day counts and average daily population counts, see Methodology.

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Adult conviction status

On June 30, 1987, convicted inmates made up 48% of the adults with a known conviction status (table 2). The number of convicted inmates increased 29% since 1983. From 1986 to 1987 the number of convicted females increased 6%. Convicted inmates include those awaiting sentencing or serving a sentence and those returned to jail because they violated the conditions of their probation or parole.

From 1986 to 1987 the number of unconvicted adult males increased 5%. Unconvicted inmates include those on trial or awaiting arraignment or trial.

Demographic characteristics

Males accounted for 92% of the jail inmate population (table 3). The adult male inmate population increased 8% between 1986 and 1987 and 31% since 1983. The number of adult female inmates in local jails increased 53% since 1983. An estimated 1 in every 318 adult males and 1 in every 3,924 adult females residing in the United States were in a local jail on June 30, 1987.

White inmates made up 57% of the jail population; blacks, 42%; and other races (Native Americans, Aleuts, Asians, and Pacific Islanders), 1%.

The Hispanic percentage of the jail population remained unchanged from 1986 to 1987 at 14%.

Population movement

During the year ending June 30, 1987, there were an estimated 17 million admissions and releases from local jails, about equally divided between the two categories (table 4). The estimated volume of releases increased by about 6% between 1983 and 1987. Adults comprised 99% of admissions and releases in each year since 1983. Total admissions and releases for the year ending June 30, 1987, were 44,103 for juvenile females, 147,537 for juvenile males, 1.7 million for adult females, and 15.1 million for adult males.

Occupancy

The number of jail inmates increased 32% since 1983, while the total rated capacity of the Nation's jails rose 15% (table 5). Between 1983 and 1987 the percent of rated capacity occupied rose 13 percentage points to 98%.

Table 1. Jail population: One-day counts and average daily population, by legal status and sex, 1983, 1986, 1987

	Number of jail inmates			Percent change from:	
	National Jail Census	Annual Survey of Jails			
	1983	1986	1987	1983-87	1986-87
One-day counts					
All inmates	223,551	274,444	295,873	32%	8%
Adults	221,815	272,736	294,092	33	8
Male	206,163	251,235	270,172	31	8
Female	15,652	21,501	23,920	53	11
Juveniles*	1,736	1,708	1,781	3	4
Average daily population					
All inmates	227,541	265,517	290,300	28%	9%
Adults	225,781	264,113	288,725	28	9
Male	210,451	243,143	264,929	26	9
Female	15,330	20,970	23,796	55	13
Juveniles*	1,760	1,404	1,575	-11	12

Note: Data for 1-day counts are for June 30 of each year.
*Juveniles are persons defined by State statute as being under a certain age, usually 18, and subject initially to juvenile court authority even if tried as adults in criminal court. Because fewer than 1% of the jail population were juveniles, caution must be used in interpreting any changes over time.

Table 2. Conviction status of adult jail inmates, by sex, 1983, 1986, 1987

	Number of jail inmates		
	National Jail Census	Annual Survey of Jails	
	1983	1986	1987
Total number of adults with known conviction status	221,644	269,179	285,495
Convicted	107,680	127,067	139,394
Male	100,587	117,100	128,818
Female	7,103	9,967	10,576
Unconvicted	113,984	142,112	150,101
Male	105,459	130,806	137,213
Female	8,525	11,306	12,888

Note: Data are for June 30 of each year.

Table 3. Demographic characteristics of jail inmates, 1986 and 1987

Characteristic	Percent of jail inmates	
	1986	1987
Sex		
Total	100%	100%
Male	92	92
Female	8	8
Race		
White	58%	57%
Male	54	53
Female	4	4
Black	41%	42%
Male	37	38
Female	3	4
Other*	1%	1%
Male	1	1
Female	--	--
Ethnicity		
Hispanic	14%	14%
Male	13	13
Female	1	1
Non-Hispanic	86%	86%
Male	80	79
Female	7	7

Note: Data are for June 30 of each year. Sex of all inmates was reported in both years. Race and ethnicity were reported for 97% of the inmates in 1986 and for 93% in 1987. Percentages may not add to total because of rounding.
--Less than 0.5%.
*Native Americans, Aleuts, Asians, and Pacific Islanders.

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Table 4. Annual jail admissions and releases, by legal status and sex, 1983, 1986, 1987

	Number of admissions/releases		
	National Jail Census	Annual Survey of Jails	
	1983	1986	1987
Admissions, total	8,084,344	8,354,032	8,627,300
Adults	7,978,978	8,261,176	8,529,983
Male	7,270,663	7,410,057	7,670,765
Female	708,315	851,119	859,218
Juveniles*	105,366	92,856	97,317
Male	86,850	72,046	74,970
Female	18,516	20,810	22,347
Releases, total	7,941,236	8,284,676	8,408,914
Adults	7,837,156	8,193,124	8,314,491
Male	7,145,818	7,342,940	7,469,188
Female	691,338	850,184	845,303
Juveniles*	104,080	91,552	94,423
Male	85,564	70,442	72,567
Female	18,516	21,110	21,856

Note: Data are for the year ending June 30.
*Juveniles are persons defined by State statute as being under a certain age, usually 18, and subject initially to juvenile court authority even if tried as adults in criminal court.

Table 5. Jail capacity and occupancy, 1983, 1986, 1987

	National Jail Census	Annual Survey of Jails	
	1983	1986	1987
Number of inmates	223,551	274,444	295,873
Rated capacity of jails	261,556	285,726	301,198
Percent of rated capacity occupied	85%	96%	98%

Note: Data are for June 30 of each year.

Table 6. Twenty-five largest jurisdictions: Average daily population and 1-day count, June 30, 1987

Jurisdiction	Average daily population, 1987[a]	One-day count, June 30, 1987
Los Angeles County, Calif.	17,115	18,593
New York City, N.Y.[b]	10,792	11,083
Cook County, Ill.	5,855	5,745
Harris County, Tex.	4,498	4,549
Philadelphia County, Pa.	4,185	3,936
Dade County, Fla.	3,491	3,753
San Diego County, Calif.	3,452	3,535
Orange County, Calif.	3,250	3,471
Maricopa County, Ariz.	3,226	3,168
Santa Clara County, Calif.	3,066	3,094
Dallas County, Tex.	2,887	2,785
Alameda County, Calif.	2,729	2,779
Orleans Parish, La.[c]	2,652	2,855
Shelby County, Tenn.	2,536	2,562
Kern County, Calif.	2,178	2,180
Baltimore City, Md.	2,177	2,296
Sacramento County, Calif.	1,996	2,071
Orange County, Fla.	1,951	1,980
Broward County, Fla.	1,893	2,042
San Bernardino County, Calif.	1,850	1,907
Washington, D.C.	1,682	1,691
Tarrant County, Tex.	1,673	1,798
Fulton County, Ga.	1,663	1,755
San Francisco County/City, Calif.	1,651	1,542
Wayne County, Mich.	1,597	1,673

[a]For the year ending June 30, 1987.
[b]Data for two jails in New York, N.Y., are from 1986.
[c]Data for jails in New Orleans, La., are from 1985.

Characteristics of jurisdictions with large jail populations

On June 30, 1987, over three-fourths of the Nation's jail population were housed in the jails of 358 jurisdictions, each with an average daily population of at least 100 inmates. Together they accounted for 611 jails, 1 fewer than in 1986. They held 224,811 inmates, a 9% increase over 1986 and a 34% increase since 1983.

The Nation's 25 largest jurisdictions had average daily populations ranging from 1,597 to 17,115 (table 6). Nine of these jurisdictions were located in California, and three were in Florida.

Inmates held for other authorities

Approximately 87% of the jurisdictions with large jail populations had one or more jails holding inmates for other authorities, about the same as in 1986 (table 7). About 77% of the jurisdictions with large jail populations that were holding inmates for other authorities were holding them for State authorities.

The percent of inmates in jurisdictions with large jail populations held for other authorities was 11% in 1986 and 12% in 1987.

Of those jurisdictions with large jail populations, 44% were holding inmates because of crowding elsewhere. Of the 26,838 inmates held for other authorities in 1987, 42%, or 11,257, were being held because of crowding elsewhere, principally in State prisons.

Table 7. Jurisdictions with large jail populations: Impact of inmates held for other authorities, 1986 and 1987

	Number of jurisdictions/inmates	
	1986	1987
Jurisdictions with large jail populations	361	358
Jurisdictions holding inmates for other authorities:*	311	311
Federal	231	183
State	233	240
Local	159	165
All inmates in jurisdictions with large jail populations	207,007	224,811
Inmates being held for other authorities:	23,170	26,838
Federal	3,668	4,441
State	16,835	19,438
Local	2,667	2,959

Note: Data are for June 30 of each year and cover all jurisdictions with an average daily inmate population of 100 or more in the 1983 jail census.

*Detail adds to more than total because some jurisdictions hold inmates for more than one authority.

Jurisdictions under court order

Between 1986 and 1987 the rated capacity of jurisdictions with large jail populations increased by 6% (table 8). Although an estimated 98% of the rated capacity of the Nation's jails was occupied on June 30, 1987, occupancy exceeded rated capacity by about 11% among jurisdictions with large jail populations. About 28% (102) of the jurisdictions with large jail populations had at least one jail under court order to reduce the number of resident inmates.

Thirty-three percent (118) of the jurisdictions with large jail populations reported that they were under court order to improve one or more conditions of confinement (table 9). Among these jurisdictions, 84% had one or more jails cited for crowded living units, 56% for inadequate recreational facilities and services, and 52% for deficient medical facilities and services.

Table 8. Jurisdictions with large jail populations: Rated capacity and percent of capacity occupied, 1986 and 1987

Jurisdictions with large jail populations	Number of jurisdictions		Rated capacity		Number of jail inmates		Percent of capacity occupied	
	1986	1987	1986	1987	1986	1987	1986	1987
Total	361	358	191,069	203,457	207,007	224,811	108%	111%
Jurisdictions without a jail under court order to reduce population	259	256	108,754	104,369	120,042	110,580	110	106
Jurisdictions with at least one jail under court order to reduce population	102	102	82,315	99,088	86,965	114,231	106	115

Note: Data are for June 30 of each year and cover all jurisdictions with an average daily inmate population of 100 or more in the 1983 jail census.

Table 9. Jurisdictions with large jail populations: Number of jurisdictions under court order to reduce population or to improve conditions of confinement, 1987

	Number of jurisdictions with large jail populations		
	Total	Ordered to limit population	Not ordered to limit population
Total	358	102	256
Jurisdictions under court order citing specific conditions of confinement	118	94	24
Subject of court order:			
Crowded living units	99	87	12
Recreational facilities	66	51	15
Medical facilities or services	61	46	15
Visitation practices or policies	51	39	12
Disciplinary procedures or policies	50	38	12
Food service (quantity or quality)	38	28	10
Administrative segregation procedures or policies	34	29	5
Staffing patterns	53	40	13
Grievance procedures or policies	48	37	11
Education or training programs	40	27	13
Fire hazards	30	26	4
Counseling programs	33	24	9
Other	21	17	4

Note: Data are for June 30, 1987, and cover all jurisdictions with an average daily inmate population of 100 or more in the 1983 jail census. Includes only jurisdictions with 1 or more jails under court order. Some jurisdictions had a jail or jails under court order for more than one reason.

Inmate deaths

Approximately 41% of the jurisdictions with large jail populations reported at least one jail with an inmate death during the year ending June 30, 1987, up from 33% in 1986 (table 10).

In jurisdictions with large jail populations in 1987, the most common cause of death was natural causes. Of the 312 inmate deaths in 1987, 55% were by natural causes, 36% were suicides, 5% were from injuries caused by other persons, and 4% were by accidents and undetermined causes.

Methodology

The 1987 Annual Survey of Jails was the fifth such survey in a series sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. The first was conducted in 1982. Complete enumerations of the Nation's jails are conducted every 5 years. Annual surveys--which collect data on all jails in jurisdictions with 100 or more jail inmates and on a sample of all other jails--are done in each of the 4 years between full censuses. The reference date for the 1987 survey was June 30, 1987. Full censuses were done on February 15, 1978, and June 30, 1983.

A local jail is a facility that holds inmates beyond arraignment, usually for more than 48 hours, and is administered by local officials. Specifically excluded from the count were temporary lockups that house persons for less than 48 hours, Federal- or State-administered facilities, privately operated facilities, and the combined jail-prison systems of Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

The 1987 survey included 1,135 total jails in 866 jurisdictions. A jurisdiction is a county, municipality, or township that administers one or more local jails. The jails in 358 jurisdictions were automatically included in the survey because the average daily inmate population in these jurisdictions was 100 or more in the 1983 jail census. The jurisdictions with large jail populations, referred to as certainty jurisdictions, accounted for 611 jails and 224,811 inmates, or 76% of the estimated inmate population on June 30, 1987. Information referring to these certainty jurisdictions is presented at the jurisdiction level. In previous years these data were presented for individual jails; therefore, comparison with earlier figures is not appropriate. The other jurisdictions surveyed constituted a stratified random sample of those jurisdictions whose average daily population was less than 100 in the 1983 jail census.

Data were obtained by mailed questionnaires. Two followup mailings and phone calls were used to encourage reporting. The response rate was 95% for jails not included in the certainty jurisdictions. Jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations responded at a rate of 97%.

National estimates for the inmate population on June 30, 1987, were produced by sex, race, legal status, and conviction status; for the average daily population during the year ending June 30, 1987, by sex and legal status; and for admissions and releases during the year ending June 30, 1987, by sex and legal status. National estimates were also produced for rated capacity. Administrators of jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations provided counts of inmates held for other authorities, inmate deaths, and jails under court order.

Except for racial and ethnic characteristics, data from the 1986 Annual Survey of Jails were used to estimate individual items of data not available from 33 respondents in 1987. Data from the 1985 jail sample survey were used to estimate individual items of data not available from 10 respondents in 1987.

National estimates have an associated sampling error (standard error) because jails with average daily populations of less than 100 were included in the survey on a sample basis. Results presented in this bulletin were tested to determine whether or not statistical significance could be associated with observed differences between values. Differences were tested to ascertain whether they were significant at 2.0 standard errors (the 95% confidence level) or higher. Differences mentioned in the text meet or exceed this 95% confidence level.

Table 10. Jurisdictions with large jail populations: inmate deaths during 1986 and 1987

	Jurisdictions reporting deaths[a]		Inmate deaths	
	1986	1987	1986	1987
Total	120	147	277	312
Cause of death:				
Natural causes[b]	66	88	145	173
Suicide	74	88	107	111
Injury by another person	6	13	11	16
Other[c]	10	10	14	12

Note: Data are for the year ending June 30 and cover all jurisdictions with an average daily inmate population of 100 or more in the 1983 jail census.
[a]Detail adds to more than total because some jurisdictions reported more than one type of death.
[b]Includes 8 deaths attributed to AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) in 1986 and 29 deaths attributed to AIDS in 1987.
[c]Includes accidents and undetermined causes of death.

Appendix table. One-day counts and average daily population of jail inmates, 1978, 1983-87

	Number of jail inmates					
	National Jail Census		Annual Survey of Jails			
	1978	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
One-day counts						
All inmates	158,394	223,551	234,500	256,615	274,444	295,873
Adults	156,783	221,815	233,018	254,986	272,736	294,092
Male	147,506	206,163	216,275	235,909	251,235	270,172
Female	9,277	15,652	16,743	19,077	21,501	23,920
Juveniles*	1,611	1,736	1,482	1,629	1,708	1,781
Average daily population						
All inmates	157,930	227,641	230,641	265,010	265,517	290,300
Adults	156,190	225,781	228,944	263,543	264,113	288,725
Male	146,312	210,451	212,749	244,711	243,143	264,929
Female	9,878	15,330	16,195	18,832	20,970	23,796
Juveniles*	1,740	1,760	1,697	1,467	1,404	1,575

Note: Data for 1-day counts are for February 15, 1978, and for June 30 for the years 1983-87.
Juveniles are persons defined by State statute as being under a certain age, usually 18, and subject initially to juvenile court authority even if tried as adults in criminal court. Because fewer than 1% of the jail population were juveniles, caution must be used in interpreting any changes over time.

Two measures of inmate population are used: the average daily population for the year ending June 30 and the inmate count on June 30 of each year. The average daily inmate population balances out any extraordinary events that may render the 1-day count atypical. The 1-day count is useful because some characteristics of the inmate population--such as race, ethnicity, and detention status--can be obtained for a specific date, but may not be available on an annual basis.

State statutes and judicial practices allow juveniles to be incarcerated in adult jails and prisons under a variety of circumstances. Juveniles are persons who are defined by State statute as being under a certain age, usually 18 years, and who are initially subject to juvenile court authority even if tried as adults in criminal court. The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 requires sight and sound separation from adults for those juveniles not tried as adults in criminal court but held in adult jails. A 1980 amendment to that 1974 act requires the removal of juveniles from local jails, except those juveniles who are tried as adults on criminal felonies. The proportion of juveniles who were housed in adult jails in accordance with these guidelines is not available.

All calculations in this report involving general population figures used Bureau of the Census estimates of the population for July 1, 1987, reported in "Current Population Reports," Series P-25, No. 1024.

Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletins are prepared principally by BJS staff. This bulletin was written by Susan Kline. Statistical assistance was provided by James Stephan, Thomas Hester, and Sophie Bowen. This bulletin was edited by Thomas Hester. Report production was administered by Marilyn Marbrook, publications unit chief, assisted by Jeanne Harris and Yvonne Shields. The sample design and data collection were carried out by Lisa McNeils, Betty Ford, Ellen Rhodes, Martha Greene, Linda Huang, and Carma Hogue of the U.S. Bureau of the Census under the direction of Diana Cull.

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